“The news…knocked air out of Jim Barton, reducing him to his unfamiliar wordless state… Finally, Barton managed to babble: ‘CIO? You want me to be the CIO?’” Jim Barton, the main character in the book *The Adventures of an IT Leader*, expresses his shock when he is told by the chief executive officer (CEO) that he will be the company’s new chief information officer (CIO).

*The Adventures of an IT Leader* is a fictional story that centers on the challenges faced by today’s CIOs. The book is about a company called IVK Corporation. The story begins with a restructuring of the organization, which results in firing the existing CIO. The head of loan operations, Jim Barton, fills the role of CIO. Barton is characterized as a dynamic executive who is likely to be a CEO someday. Incidentally, he has been the most vocal and ardent critic of the IT function. This irony makes the story a lot more interesting.

The story then unfolds as Barton readies himself for this new challenge. Being a nontechnical person, the first lesson he learns from The Kid, a tech nerd Jim meets at a bar, is “You’ve got to know what you don’t know.”

Each chapter of the story focuses on a particular challenge that today’s CIO faces. Barton learns something new in each of the chapters. First, he learns the mystery of the IT budget and understands the logic behind hidden IT costs. Then, he is challenged by the other business leaders to demonstrate the value of IT. He also faces day-to-day challenges such as IT portfolio and project management and the fight between Waterfall and Agile delivery methods.

In part three, Barton experiences his first crisis, which is a serious hacking attack on the company’s network, which threatens his role as CIO and takes the jobs of two senior members of the company.

In parts four and five, he matures in his role and handles the influence of emerging technologies on IT. He also learns tricks of the trade for human resources and vendor management.

The role of CIO has evolved over the last 15 years or so. From a subordinate function under administration or finance, it moved to the forefront of the organizational hierarchy during the dot-com era to becoming a highly criticized role once the dot-com bubble burst. The latest trend is to put business leaders in positions as IT leaders. Only time will tell if this trend is successful. *The Adventures of an IT Leader* explores many facets of this trend and is an interesting read for an existing CIO or a would-be CIO.

**EDITOR’S NOTE**

*The Adventures of an IT Leader* is available from the ISACA® Bookstore. For information, visit www.isaca.org/bookstore, email bookstore@isaca.org or telephone +1.847.660.5650.